

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Human Trafficking

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Policy

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is committed to

- identifying
- rescuing
- protecting
- providing services for

children who have been identified as victims of human trafficking.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-82; Conn. Gen. Stat. 46b-133; . Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-192a; Conn. Gen. Stat. 54-222; and Conn. Gen Stat. 46a-170.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

As part of the Child Protective System, DCF shall collaborate with

- state and local law enforcement,
- juvenile justice,
- health care providers
- education agencies
- organizations with experience in dealing with at-risk youth

to develop and update policies and procedures (including relevant training for Social Workers) for

- identifying,
- documenting in agency records, and
- determining appropriate services

for any child over whom DCF has responsibility for placement, care or supervision and who DCF has reasonable cause to believe is a sex trafficking victim.

Careline Responsibilities

For any referral of alleged human trafficking of a child, the Careline shall:

- identify cases with Human Trafficking characteristics for tracking purposes;

NOTE: "Characteristics" should be noted if a child or circumstance presents with risk factors or behaviors that suggest Human Trafficking.

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Careline Responsibilities (continued)

- assess for acceptance per Operational Definitions (cross reference DCF Policy 22-3);
- obtain complete information as to why the reporter suspects human trafficking and any other concerns regarding child's well-being;
- notify respective local law enforcement, Statewide Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (HART) Lead, FBI, and Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) via DCF-737;
- if referral does meet acceptance criteria, assign to the appropriate Regional Office/Special Investigative Unit for investigation (FAR rule out of Sexual Abuse) and create Exceptional Circumstance - Critical Incident via DCF-823 (cross reference DCF Policy 22-1-2).

Intake Worker Responsibilities

The Investigation Social Worker shall

- consult with the Statewide Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (HART) Lead for assessment and triage;
- collaborate with the Regional HART through the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to identify appropriate recommendations for intervention and investigation; and,
- consult with DCF legal staff, Regional Resource Group (RRG) and other appropriate resources as needed.

Note: If Human Trafficking, as defined in the Operational Definitions, is first identified during the course of an investigation, the Investigation Social Worker shall contact the Careline to make a new referral.

On-Going Worker Responsibilities

When Human Trafficking concerns are newly identified on an open case with the Department, the Ongoing Social Worker shall:

- notify respective local law enforcement, the Statewide HART Lead, FBI, and MDT via DCF-737;
- assess for Human Trafficking behaviors/concerns and consult with HART Regional Lead as appropriate;
- refer to the Careline any new allegation of Human Trafficking as defined in the Operational Definitions,
- incorporate Human Trafficking assessment and concerns into case planning activities.

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HART Regional Lead Responsibilities

The Regional HART Lead shall:

- provide guidance to social workers and DCF staff for cases involving concerns or at-risk characteristics of human trafficking;
 - complete necessary screenings, when appropriate, and triage human trafficking involved cases in need of additional assessments; and,
 - serve as liaisons to the Statewide HART Lead and Human Trafficking Task Force and provide trainings as requested.
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HART Statewide Lead Responsibilities

The Statewide HART Lead shall:

- Review all forwarded DCF-737 forms and assess all reports identified with characteristics of Human Trafficking;
 - triage both non-accepted and accepted referrals for response by the local HART Response Team;
 - provide leadership and consultation to the Regional HART Leads;
 - be responsible for documentation of HART related data in the identified electronic system.
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HART Response Team Responsibilities

The HART is comprised of internal and external partners of the Department, identified and connected through local MDT's. Their role is to convene as recommended by the Statewide HART Lead in response to allegations of Human Trafficking, whether accepted or not by the Department for CPS investigation.

If there is an active investigation with the Department, consultation will occur to coordinate the investigation within the parameters identified through DCF Investigations Policy. For referrals that are not accepted by the Department for failing to meet Operational Definitions, the HART will identify regionalized community-based interventions and resources that can help address the presenting concern and potential local law enforcement investigation.

Examples of services may include, but are not limited to:

- forensic interview
 - youth/peer support
 - placement/shelter
 - interpersonal support/mentoring
 - threat assessment
 - rapid response
 - VOCA case management
 - medical/mental health evaluation
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Law Enforcement Human Trafficking Victim Recovery Operations

Targeted law enforcement operations for the purpose of recovering child victims of human trafficking are often conducted in collaboration with DCF.

When possible, the law enforcement agency will notify the designated DCF HART or Careline administrator prior to an operation for planning and coordination of resources. DCF shall take steps to ensure that designated staff, placements and resources are available to support these operations.

Unique Service Options for Immigrant Child Victims of Human Trafficking

The determination of services and placement of an immigrant child who is a victim of trafficking is dependent on many factors that differ from situations in which trafficking is not an issue.

The DCF Eligibility Certification Coordinator, within the Office of Multicultural Affairs, shall make the appropriate contacts with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Anti-Trafficking In Persons Child Protection Specialist to obtain the necessary letters of eligibility and certification for the child.

Legal Reference: 45 CFR §400.116.

Repatriation reunification is available for an immigrant child when

- it is in his or her best interest to return to the country of origin
- and
- there is no risk of being re-trafficked.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The Interstate Compact Office (ICO) should be contacted immediately in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes in accepted cases:

- involving the identification of a trafficked youth in Connecticut who is not a resident of the State of Connecticut;
- when a minor child who is a Connecticut resident or in the care and custody of Connecticut's DCF is located in another state with concerns of human trafficking, AND the out-of-state travel was not authorized by the Department and/or legal guardian.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-175

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Other Service Options for Child Victims Of Human Trafficking

Specialized licensed out-of-home care is available for immigrant children and children who are U.S. citizens if they are victims of trafficking.

These programs include foster care, group homes and other therapeutic settings.

Placement in these programs shall proceed only when the facility or placement agency is informed of the child's status as a victim of human trafficking because these children are considered a high risk for being runaways.

Confidential Records

Information about sex trafficking cases and victims that is maintained by DCF is protected by state and federal confidentiality laws. DCF shall only disclose this information to the appropriate authorities or other third parties as permitted by law.
